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MR. CLINGMAN, OF N. CAROLINA,

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 4, 1854.

The House being in the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union—

Mr. CLINGMAN said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: As no one has had the floor assigned to him, I will now occupy it with a view of saying something upon a question which has been already discussed at great length during the present session of Congress.

I have heretofore sought an opportunity to present to this House certain points connected with the Nebraska bill. It is probable that I shall find an hour little time enough for my purpose, and therefore I say to the gentlemen around me that I hope they will not interrupt me by asking permission to explain. I shall endeavor to do justice to every one, but should it be my misfortune to misrepresent any gentleman with whose opinions I may come in collision, I hope that he will avail himself of some other occasion to correct me. It has never been my misfortune, while I have occupied a seat upon this floor, to make a single remark that any gentleman in the House thought offensive to him, nor have I ever been called upon to explain anything I have said in the course of debate. My purpose will be to-day to keep within due parliamentary bounds, and at the same time frankly and fairly to discuss the questions connected with this subject, upon what I understand to be their true merits.

You have been told by the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MILLSON] that I had something to say upon the Nebraska territorial bill in the last Congress, when it was pending, not in the shape, however, in which it is now presented. After a speech on it, I offered an amendment, to protect the rights of the Indians, which was adopted, and I then voted for the bill. That amendment now stands in the present bill in the identical language in which it was offered by me. The fact that more than two thirds of that Congress thought that a territorial organization was then necessary affords an additional reason, to my mind, why we should at once organize a Territory there. I voted for the bill then—not liking it, however, and after trying to get it in a better shape—because there was nothing offensive in the bill itself. I greatly prefer the proposition which has come from the Senate. I could well support it as it is; but I shall vote, nevertheless, to strike out what is known as the Clayton amendment; not that I think it is wrong in theory, but because it will lead to no practical results, and was moved by an enemy of the bill merely to embarrass its friends in the North. As to the amendment of my colleague, [Senator Badger,] I do not think that it changes the character of the original bill in any manner whatsoever. Be that as it may, as the bill now stands, it provides, in the clearest terms, that the people of that Territory shall not be prohibited, by

any law formerly existing, from legislating as the Constitution of the United States permits them to do. It does not say that there shall be no law upon the subject of slavery. It merely says that it will not REVIVE any former old law prohibiting or establishing it. In other words, that it will leave this Territory just as though there had never been in it any law upon the subject of slavery.

This, in my judgment, is the best species of non-intervention. We say that the people of the Territory may legislate as the Constitution of the United States permits them to do, without the intervention of Congressional law, French law, Spanish law, Mexican law, or Indian law. It makes the Territory like a sheet of blank paper, on which our citizens may write American constitutional law. It is, therefore, a better bill than the Utah and New Mexico bills of 1850; because those bills left the Mexican laws in force, by which slavery had been abolished and prohibited. It is a better bill than the Clayton compromise; because that compromise left those Mexican laws in force; and yet every southern Democrat in both Houses of Congress, including Mr. Calhoun, supported that measure under the idea that the Constitution of the United States, *proprio vigore*, would override, annul, and supersede those local laws. If they were right in this view, why then the more certainly would that Constitution be sufficient where there was no opposing law whatever. I am satisfied that if the Clayton compromise and the acts of 1850 had contained a repeal of the Mexican law, there would have been no opposition to them from the South. I say, then, with the utmost confidence, that the Kansas and Nebraska bills are, for the South, the best measures yet presented.

I shall not stop to answer the ingenious speech of the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. MILLSON,] or that of the gentleman from Maryland, [Mr. FRANKLIN.] The points argued by them were very much discussed six or seven years ago, by those of us who were then in Congress. I will only say that the real question to be met is this: "Shall this territory be left open to every citizen of the United States, with the Constitution alone to control him, or shall the Wilmot proviso stand on it?" That is the point which gentlemen have to meet. They have to show to their constituencies, that the Wilmot proviso, now standing upon and controlling the territory, is better than having it open to everybody, whether from the South or the North. I leave gentlemen to make the explanation to their constituents as they best can. It is enough for me to say that the arguments and excuses given by them are not, in my opinion, of the smallest weight to justify opposition to the bill.

But, sir, before noticing what I regard as the principal difficulty in the way, let me advert to one

other striking point. I know that in 1850 certain persons professed to be in favor of non-intervention who were really opposed to that principle. The true friends of the system—those who had sustained the doctrine of General Cass—are, I have no doubt, willing to carry it out to-day. But there were certain persons at that time entirely adverse to the principle in fact, but who, nevertheless, then gave it a hypocritical support, because they said that the settlement at that time, as proposed on non-intervention grounds, would operate injuriously to the southern section. They saw that it let in the whole of California down to the 32^d of north latitude as a free State, and that it threw the Santa Fé country out of Texas, a slave State, into New Mexico, a Territory where the Mexican law had abolished slavery, and, in the opinion of Mr. Webster, Mr. Clay, and many other prominent men, was still in full force, and sufficient to keep out slavery; and also that the people there were, as foreigners, understood to be hostile to the establishment of slavery in any way. In short, that, as these prominent gentlemen said, the North got the territory practically, while we of the South got only the principle of non-intervention for the future. This principle, highly valuable in itself, they did not intend to apply to the organization of other Territories. The conduct of these persons shows that they did not, in good faith, intend to adopt the system as a general one. Hence, when afterwards this was declared to be a settlement in “*principle and substance*,” by Mr. Fillmore and the national convention, these persons only *pretended* to agree to the declaration. Their conduct now shows their insincerity, and the hollowness of their professions.

But, Mr. Chairman, it is sometimes said by gentlemen that this Missouri compromise was originally advantageous to the South, and that now, when it has ceased to be so, we want to get clear of it. Let us look at this statement for one moment.

Missouri and Arkansas were admitted as slave States. Their extent was one hundred and seventeen thousand square miles. But, on the other hand, Iowa was admitted as a free State, and Minnesota was organized as a Territory, also with a restriction or prohibition of slavery. So also were Oregon and Washington. Now, sir, these three Territories and that State contain five hundred and thirty-four thousand square miles in their area—nearly five times as much as the States of Missouri and Arkansas. Remember, too, that all this had originally been slave territory up to the date of the Missouri restriction. It appears, therefore, that while this policy of division was enforced by the Missouri line, the northern section of the country acquired five times as much territory as the southern. Minnesota and Iowa alone have nearly twice the extent of the two slave States of Missouri and Arkansas, and Washington and Oregon have three times as much more. It must also be borne in mind that Mr. Buchanan, as Secretary of State, claimed, in the controversy with Great Britain, the Oregon Territory as well under the French and Spanish cessions as by the right of discovery.

As to how our title to it really accrued is not, however, material; because, under the policy of division by the Missouri line, this whole territory was given up by the South without a struggle, because it lay north of that line, and organized with the principle of restriction embodied in it. It thus will be seen that the North obtained five times as

much of this territory as the South, while the policy of division was adhered to. But when the Mexican territory was acquired, by running out this same line, the South would have fared better, and gotten, in fact, more than one third of the territory. The northern members of Congress, however, rejected the line, in spite of all our attempts to get it adopted. Many of the Democratic members did so because they were in favor of the principle of non-intervention, as recommended by their candidate, General Cass; while the Whigs resisted it because they were Free-Soilers, and in favor of the Wilmot proviso. In the end they carried the day, and broke down the policy of division; and non-intervention was established. Shall this policy now be carried out for the future; or is it to be set aside, as the former one was, when it would have been favorable to the South? This is the first occasion since 1850 for a trial of the matter. As to the Territory of Washington, organized by the last Congress, the gentleman from Virginia [Mr. MILLSON] has overlooked an important fact. Washington was a part of the Oregon Territory; and the people there had, in their Territorial Legislature, passed a law prohibiting slavery. This was done before Congress applied the Wilmot proviso to it. Had we, therefore, during the last Congress, repealed their laws already established, this would have been a direct violation of the principle on which the present measure rests, viz: the right of the people to regulate their own domestic matters.

It appears, therefore, Mr. Chairman, that the Kansas and Nebraska bills afford the first proper occasion for carrying out the new principles adopted in 1850.

I come now, Mr. Chairman, to what I consider the great obstacle to the passage of the bill. The main opposition to it does not arise from any of the sources as yet alluded to, but it comes from another quarter and a force which has been fighting the question under false colors and in disguise; and I now propose to unmask the character of that opposition. It seems to be well understood that every member of the old Whig party upon this floor from the North is an opponent of the bill. I understand that those gentlemen are making earnest appeals to southern Whigs not to press this question on them, lest they should thereby break up the old Whig party. They are also deprecating agitation and insisting on quiet, &c. Those appeals are not made to me, Mr. Chairman, because for the last four or five years I have, for reasons which I will presently state, regarded myself as disconnected with that organization which these gentlemen control. In fact, I am rather out of all regular party organizations, and am regarded, I believe, as an independent. But, sir, to enable those members from the South who have less experience than myself to understand the subject properly, and to know how much weight they ought to attach to such declarations and appeals, I wish to recur to some things in the past, in no offensive spirit, but to make clear to every one the real principles upon which these gentlemen have been and are still acting.

In 1846 the Wilmot proviso was brought forward; every Whig from the free States voted for it. It produced great excitement in the country, and came very near breaking up the party. They said, however, to southern Whigs, Do not be alarmed about this proviso; we only mean to use it to put a stop to the Mexican war, and prevent the conquest of Mexico; and also, to split in two

the Democratic party in New York, and cripple them in Pennsylvania, in Wilmot's district. I remember how they used to put their arms around their southern friends in the kindest manner, and exclaimed, "My God, do you suppose that we mean to push this thing, and drive you all off from us? Do not fear; we shall not press it to a practical extreme." After the war terminated, the first attempt to settle the question was by the Clayton compromise. That was not entirely satisfactory to the South. But whether we should take it or not, depended upon the chance there was of getting a better bill instead of it. The northern Whigs, however, in a body, assailed it in the fiercest manner. They said it was a cheat in itself; that it gave the South nothing practically, and was a mere scheme of the Democratic party to unite their forces and elect General Cass. It was said that if it passed he would be elected, General Taylor would be stricken down, and utterly repudiated by the North, under the fierce excitement which would be raised, and that, possibly, even the Free-Soilers would carry everything. I do not know that these declarations had any weight with those southern gentlemen who went against the bill. I doubt, in fact, if they did; but those who were here at that time know well the earnest appeals that were made to southern men, and the promises held out of a better settlement at a future time.

The bill was defeated, and the election went, as everybody expected it would. By the division of the Democrats in the State of New York, Cass lost its vote, and in the Wilmot district in Pennsylvania, and other places, there was defection enough to lose him that State; and General Taylor carried both those States, the loss of either of which would have been fatal to him. The Northern Whigs had therefore triumphed upon their extreme anti-slavery policy. We had a right to expect, therefore, that they would at length be liberal towards us, and come to a fair adjustment of the pending issues. We met in December, after the presidential election, and, as a measure of conciliation and harmony, one of those gentlemen, Mr. Gott, of New York, introduced a bill, in most offensive language, to abolish the slave trade in the District of Columbia. All of those gentlemen voted for it, with the exception of Mr. Lincoln, of Illinois, only, I believe. They passed it by a heavy majority, with the aid of some Free-Soil Democrats. The southern members of both Houses of Congress thereupon held a meeting in the Senate Chamber. The northern Whigs, seeing the condition of things likely to be produced, and feeling some alarm, in that same soothing and conciliating manner for which they were distinguished, said that the vote on Gott's resolution was a hasty and inconsiderate act, and that they would reconsider the resolution and reject it. They also said that the meetings which we were holding had been gotten up by General Foote, Mr. Calhoun, and other Democrats, with a covert design of breaking down General Taylor's administration before it came into power, by exciting divisions between northern and southern Whigs, and that we ought to have more confidence in them than such a movement implied, and that all difficulties could be arranged amicably. These declarations had no weight with me, as I had determined not to give my coöperation further, except on just principles.

It was seen, however, that there was no occasion for action at that time on the part of the southern members, and the excitement passed by.

But, sir, the matter did not stop there. At that

session many members of the Democratic party in the Senate being still anxious to settle the question, Mr. Walker, a Senator from Wisconsin, with great liberality and manliness, brought forward a proposition as an amendment to the civil and diplomatic bill, which would have settled the whole question fairly and on liberal terms. That proposition was adopted in the Senate, and came into this House, and was here supported by every southern member of both parties, and also by many liberal northern Democrats. It was ascertained that it was likely to pass, and thereupon the northern Whigs, who ought rather to have desired to get the matter settled so as to avoid embarrassment to General Taylor's incoming administration, made the strongest opposition to it. They entered into a combination with the Free-Soilers and Abolitionists to defeat it; and when it was seen that we would probably carry it, they, as they then said and afterwards boasted, had agreed that rather than a majority should be allowed to pass it, they would call the yeas and nays until the end of the session, and thus defeat all the appropriation bills. In this way some who were in favor of it were frightened, and induced to give way, so that the measure was lost.

Then, sir, during the year following they kept this question before the people at the North, and the result was that the Cass Democrats were beaten almost everywhere in that section of the country; and when we met at the commencement of the session of 1849-'50, it was ascertained that they had nearly ninety Whig members from the North, every man of whom was pledged to vote for the Wilmot proviso and for the abolition of slavery wherever Congress had jurisdiction, and particularly in the District of Columbia. I recollect very well that in our caucus upon a resolution offered by Mr. Toombs, Mr. Brooks, of New York, said that he and his colleague, Mr. Briggs, had determined not to vote for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia during the first session of that Congress. That was all we could get by way of concession from them. They would not vote for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia the first session, but they would make no such promise for the second session, and then stood ready to vote for the proviso. Several prominent gentlemen from Massachusetts, Ohio, and other States, declared that the doctrine upon which they had been elected was that of hostility to slavery, and that they should vote for abolishing it wherever Congress had jurisdiction over the subject, and also to exclude it from all territory of the United States. To this doctrine there was no dissent from that section of the Union, though it was earnestly sought by southern Whigs in the hope that they might find some ground for united action as a party.

Such was the condition of things at the beginning of that Congress. The country was in a state of extreme peril. The whole northern Whig party, in great force, and a number of Democrats, also upon the Free-Soil platform, were ready to act, and many of the Cass men—for by that name the non-intervention men were designated—were disposed to get out of the way, and let the bills pass, and then see what General Taylor would do with them. There was a large majority of the Congress thus pledged to push through these measures.

I do not propose to take up the time of the committee with a rehearsal of the events of that

memorable session of 1849-'50. The majority were pledged to a line of policy that they dared not then carry out; and I do not hesitate to say boldly, that if that policy had been carried out in practice, your Government would not exist to-day, and ought not to have lived an hour.

They perceived what the effect was likely to be, and the remarkable condition of things was exhibited of men pledged to a certain course of conduct which they saw would be destructive, and who were begging others to keep the question out of the way, and save them from the effect of their own principles. General Taylor's administration and Cabinet, it is well known, could not get along upon the principles that had brought them into power, and were obliged to fall back upon their do-nothing policy. Why, even at the close of that session, after there had been a change of the Administration—after Mr. Fillmore, who was favorable to a more liberal policy, came into power—after the admission of California as a free State, with the whole Pacific, for a thousand miles embraced in it—after the passage of that series of measures which Mr. Webster himself said, as to the territory gave the North everything, and to the South nothing but the fugitive slave law—out of more than eighty members we found only three northern Whigs to vote for that act, and of those three, only my friend from Ohio [Mr. TAYLOR] has been returned by his party. Even after the bill was passed there was an attempt to get up the cry of repeal under the lead of Senator Seward, and great agitation made all through the North, and a large majority of these men who had refused to vote for the law concurred in the clamor; there was a fierce struggle—a struggle to catch the anti-slavery feeling there and acquire party strength. I may add, even after that, it is well known that in the selection of candidates for the Presidency they endeavored to throw out of the way, and set the seal of popular condemnation on Mr. Webster and Mr. Fillmore, because of their connection with these measures. These things have been well discussed, and are generally understood by the country.

Why, sir, we forced them with extreme difficulty in the convention to come up and adopt a platform to carry out these measures. About half of the northern men voted against it, and a great many of the party organs denounced and repudiated the platform, and thereby, as was proven in the end, materially contributed to the overwhelming defeat of the candidate.

I have made this review, and stated these things, Mr. Chairman, to show that these Whig gentlemen from the North, as a party, have stood all the time on extreme anti-slavery ground; that they have all the while made efforts to acquire party strength by appealing to the anti-slavery feeling of the North, and to Abolition sympathies. Now, what would you expect of them on this question? And what do you suppose they are going to do? Exactly what they have been doing for the last seven or eight years. These gentlemen are not opposing this measure because it interferes with the Missouri compromise. Why, there is not one of them, probably, who ever alluded to that compromise, except in terms of denunciation, until the beginning of the present session. I might show you that the gentleman from Vermont [Mr. MEACHAM] who led off, some time since, against the Nebraska bill, in September, 1850, voted against the recognition of the Missouri line when moved by myself. I might have shown, and if I had obtained the floor when the gentleman took

his seat I would have shown, that the State of Vermont has, through her representatives, repudiated every single congressional compromise ever made; not only nullifying the fugitive slave law of 1850, as well as the act of 1793, but all previous compromises.

In 1833, when South Carolina had taken steps to nullify the revenue laws, Mr. Clay's compromise bill was passed, bringing down the duties to twenty per centum. Afterwards, to strengthen the measure when the land distribution was passed, on motion of Senator Berrien, of Georgia, it was provided that this distribution should stop if the duties should be raised above twenty per centum; and yet this measure of compromise, thus fortified, was, against the vote of the whole South, both Whig and Democrat, repealed, and the land distribution also stopped by the vote of the members from Vermont and other northern States. Why, sir, immediately after the passage of this very act of 1820, prohibiting slavery north of 36° 30', and providing for the admission of Missouri as a slave State, a resolution, in the strongest terms, was adopted by the Vermont Legislature, instructing their Representatives not to let Missouri into the Union unless she abolished slavery from within her limits. If it were a compromise act, as he alleged, then his own State violated it; and so did New York, and a number of other States; and so did a large majority of the northern members of Congress by refusing Missouri admission. No, sir; these gentlemen are now doing exactly what they have been doing for many years past, viz: affiliating with Free-Soilers and Abolitionists, and making a great effort to obtain party strength in the North by assailing the Democrats, who are more liberal to us on these questions.

Now, I do not desire to see this agitation kept up, for reasons which I will presently advert to; and I will submit the question to these gentlemen candidly, what have they gained by all this excitement, and all their denunciation of slavery? Of course they must have expected to lose the South. The wonder is that they have anybody there at all friendly to them. That it is otherwise only shows great force of party ties and attachments. In my own State, originally one of the most decided Whig States in the Union, they have placed themselves in the minority. Kentucky has her twenty-five thousand majority brought down, I believe, to about nothing at all. Tennessee likewise, and indeed the whole South, has been pretty much thrown against them. What did they gain in the North? Ohio used to be a Whig State, and I believe, at the last election, they were beaten sixty thousand votes. They were beaten everywhere in the North during the late presidential canvass, except in Massachusetts and Vermont; and they were weaker there than they were ten years ago, when they began the agitation against slavery. They have been losing ground even at home, and why is it? I think I can tell you. It is because there is an equity in our claim to have a share of the benefits of this Government that has made our cause strong in spite of all their efforts. We are a part of the American citizens who constitute the people of the Union. We pay taxes to support the Government, and bear arms in time of war; and the attempt to exclude us from the benefit of the Government is so unjust, that they have been losing ground on that account.

In spite of all the appeals to fanaticism and denunciation of us and our social system in New England, old men remember, and young ones have

read, that when George Washington went to Boston, in 1775, to help drive the British out of the city, he was not repudiated because he was a slaveholder. New Yorkers know that in the fight at Saratoga, which perhaps determined the result of the revolutionary struggle, Gates and Morgan were thought none the less worthy companions of the brave men of the North because they were slaveholders. In the late war, Harrison and Scott, of Virginia, and Forsyth, of North Carolina, and many others from the South, were on the boundary line with the patriotic men of the North, defending the national territory. No man ever had a stronger hold on the masses of the North than Andrew Jackson. Neither he nor his great rival, Henry Clay, ever stood before a northern audience, during the last ten years of their lives, without being welcomed with a shout of applause. The very many brave and gallant men who went from the free States into the Mexican war, will tell their neighbors that the southern regiments who were with them, in that country, on the day of battle, stood by the American colors. They have, therefore, been constantly losing ground, while the national men have been gaining on them, in spite of their alliance with the fanaticism and sectional prejudices of the anti-slavery party. The issue is upon better footing to-day than it has ever before been placed upon, viz: the right of every community to regulate its own local matters without the intervention of those having no direct interest in the questions.

It has been well said that there is a great resemblance between this issue and that involved in the struggle between the Colonies and Great Britain at the Declaration of Independence. There is, however, one great and striking difference between the two cases. The Colonies in 1776 denied the right of Great Britain to tax them to the smallest extent; but the people of Kansas and Nebraska say to Congress, "You may impose any amount of taxation upon us, and we will cheerfully pay it; you may make your own disposition of the public lands, lay off your military roads and post roads, and establish your forts and arsenals; you may subject us to the action of every law of Congress that the citizens of any one State in this Union is subject to; but when you have done all that, when you have exhausted all your powers under the Constitution of the United States, then we ask the poor privilege of managing our local affairs according to our own wishes." And why should they not have it? Why should Massachusetts or North Carolina control the people of those Territories? Sir, the question stands upon the great republican right of every community to legislate for itself. I know there are individuals who deny that right. It is impossible to conceal the fact that there is a large party—I do not know whether I ought to call it a party, or whether it is a mere fragment of a party—in this country who have denied that right, and who, in the bottom of their hearts, do not believe that the people are capable of self-government. It is the same feeling that prompted the old sedition act; it is the same feeling which has thrown the influence of certain men against all questions of popular right. Now, it is very hard for me to designate them. I do not know that I could properly call them the Anti-Slavery party, for that would not be a very accurate designation; nor the Federal party, even though it might do well to combine the two names. Perhaps I might refer to one of their leading organs with advantage.

The gentleman from Georgia, [Mr. STEPHENS,] I remember, commented upon the course of the National Intelligencer. Now, I think that journal is a faithful exponent of the party I allude to. Its regard for the Missouri compromise has been assumed only for the present occasion. I remember very well that during the struggle, up to 1850, that paper never came out for this Missouri line, although the South was battling for it for years; nor did it once assert our right to occupy the Territory in common with the people of the North, clear and indisputable as that right was. Its whole weight and influence were covertly but adroitly thrown against us, and on the anti-slavery side. I never attributed this course to any love of liberty on the part of the conductors of that paper. On the contrary, in every struggle between liberty and despotism, it takes the side of despotism; in every contest between the United States and any foreign country, it takes ground against the United States. It would be marvelous if our Government were, in fact, always wrong on every issue with a foreign nation. I presume, therefore, that it is because ours is the freest Government upon earth that this journal always is found taking sides against it, and for our enemies. As to our internal policy, it is the faithful organ of that party which has labored industriously, as you and I well know, sir, to destroy all the limitations of the Federal Constitution, and substitute an absolute central Government in its stead. These people have taken their opinions mainly from the Tory press and the Tory party of England; and those opinions happen to be anti-slavery as well as anti-republican. They seem to desire no higher honor than to have the privilege of adopting and defending everything which comes from these sources. If any gentleman will take the trouble to examine some of the British anti-slavery journals, he will see the whole programme of our abolition countrymen laid down there. They praise and defend the British policy in all things. A few years ago, for example, Great Britain voted \$100,000,000 to liberate her negroes in Jamaica, and convert them into savages; and since that event two millions of her white people at home have perished miserably by famine. It is demonstrable that if that sum had been applied properly at home, every one of these unfortunate Irish men, women, and children might have been saved. Even if she would devote the millions which are now expended annually for the benefit of the negroes in Africa, she would save the lives of her own white people. Still her policy in all things is defended by her allies here.

Great Britain is a very sagacious Power, and not less selfish than sagacious. She knows well that in the future she has more to dread from the United States than from any other nation. She knows that our people are contesting with her now wherever the sea rolls, and wherever mind comes in contact with mind. But she is too cautious and far-sighted to assail us on a point where we are united. Hence she attacks us upon matters connected with slavery, and straightway you see the Abolition party, headed by such leaders as the gentleman from Ohio, [Mr. GIDDINGS,] at once arising in her behalf, and making a terrific clamor throughout the land, and distracting the public mind and diverting it from the real issue. And you see that larger anti-slavery party, of which the Intelligencer is an organ, at once likewise taking sides with her upon all such questions. Even though they do not succeed in effecting anything

practically in the way of the abolition of slavery, or in bringing about a collision between different sections of the country, yet they do a great deal for her, our rival. They keep us in an eternal agitation about this question of slavery to the neglect of great national interests. We do not put our public defenses in a proper condition; we fail to protect sufficiently the rights of our citizens abroad, whether in the fisheries of the Northeast, in Central America, in Cuba, or elsewhere; and therefore, I say, it is as wise as well as selfish policy on the part of Great Britain to keep us embroiled in such difficulties and discussions, so that her anti-slavery allies here, who are very faithful to her, can assist her in carrying out her policy.

I desire, sir, that this question of the organization of the Territory of Nebraska shall be treated as a great American question, with no foreign influence brought to bear upon it. It will be found, I think, that I have done no injustice to any one in the course of remark in which I have indulged. Whoever is familiar with the political records of Congress and the country, which I have merely glanced at, will find my conclusions right. At any rate, I am confident that I shall be able to defend and maintain every single allegation made. Instead of meeting the Nebraska question on its merits, its opponents are heaping a great deal of denunciation on the friends of this bill, especially Senator Douglas and President Pierce. A great flood of calumny has been opened upon Judge Douglas especially. The manner in which it has been manifested at certain points in the North is equally malicious, contemptible, cowardly, and mean; and not less futile and harmless, than contemptible and mean. Neither the statesman of the Granite State, nor the young champion of the western Democracy, will ever be harmed by these assaults. He who is most thoroughly identified with this great popular American principle will be borne with it onward and upward in its career of triumph. In the discussion of this question I have been particularly struck by one fact, and that is, the unwillingness of the opponents of the measure to meet the issue fairly. And hence they are falling back on the opinions of our ancestors of 1775 and 1776 upon the question of slavery. They seem anxious to get rid of the light of the nineteenth century, and fall back upon the opinions of a former age, and of the men who lived when the Government began its existence.

Now, sir, it is universally admitted that the Constitution of the United States itself has nothing in it to support these anti-slavery views; on the contrary, every single provision in that instrument is pro-slavery—that is, for the protection, and defense, and increase of slavery. For example, one of them is that provision by which the slave trade was extended for twenty years, by which the Constitution expressly forbade Congress to put a stop to the trade for that period, and under which provision most of the negroes were brought into this country. That feature, it is well known, was adopted by the entire New England vote, in convention, with the aid of South Carolina and Georgia, against the other southern and middle States.

But, Mr. Chairman, I admit that there are many opinions against slavery expressed by individuals, such as Jefferson and others, as private persons, and which have been referred to in the discussion of this question. No man has more respect than I have for the opinions of the great men of that day on all subjects in which they were

fully enlightened as to facts. I hold their authority on such questions as entitled to the greatest weight. But no man will pretend that the world has not made a prodigious advance in knowledge since their time. No sensible or enlightened man would go back to Benjamin Franklin, philosopher as he was, for information on scientific subjects, or adopt his views as to mechanics, electrical, or steam machinery, in preference to many men of our day. But among all the great advances that have been made in human science—whether you take geology, chemistry, or any other branch of knowledge—the greatest advance, perhaps, of all has been made in the science of Government, and of the difference of the races of men and their adaptation to different social institutions. In the last century, sir, many of the leading men of the country looked, no doubt, upon the negro as in every respect like a white man, except that, by some strange freak of nature, the former had a black skin. That idea no longer prevails. The whole doctrine of negro equality with white men has been exploded in our day, not merely in the South, but throughout the United States.

The people of Indiana and of Illinois have recently—and that, too, by an immense majority—decided against that equality; and have forbidden any negro to enter into those States. In the State of Connecticut, too, when the proposition to enable negroes to vote was submitted to the people of that State a few years ago, the question was decided by a vote of nearly four to one against the negro; and they were refused the privilege of voting, *merely* because they *were* negroes. New York has recently done the same thing. In fact, there is not a single free State, where the issue has been directly made on the question of negro equality, that the mass of the people have not decided against it; nor can it be made without the same result.

I happened, Mr. Chairman, to be in Connecticut when this vote was taken. I found that most of the newspapers seemed to be on the side of the negroes, and many of the literary men of the State, and they anticipated a triumph; but when the votes of the people came to be counted, the result was altogether the other way. Why, Mr. Chairman, if all the literary men on the earth were to argue that the rays of the sun were the cause of darkness and cold, they never could convince people who walk in this glorious sunshine that their theory was correct. They might persuade those who live down in the bowels of the earth—those who work in the coal mines of Great Britain all their lives. So, too, these Abolitionists may convince the people of England of the equality of the negro to the white man, because they do not see the negro, and, in fact, know nothing about him; but our Americans, who have seen the specimens, cannot be thus humbugged.

I say, sir, that the idea of negro equality no longer exists in the United States as a fact. I care nothing about theories, nor how this difference is accounted for. Some of our Abolition brethren, being soft-headed, and easily deluded on all subjects, for example, say that the negro is different from the white man because of the effect of climate, manner of life, and want of opportunity to become civilized, &c. All history and fact is at war with these ideas. The negro has been placed by Providence in that country and climate most favorable to his health and well-being; and his opportunities for acquiring the advantages of early civilization were vastly greater than those of the northern bar-

barians, from whom we have ourselves descended. They were, more than four thousand years ago, in contact with the Egyptians, the most enlightened nation of antiquity. Afterwards the Carthaginians, a highly intelligent Phœnician colony of white men, the first people of their day, overran all Northern Africa, and brought some of the negro races into subjection. Then came the great Roman Empire, which civilized everything else it touched, but made no impression upon the negroes. The Saracens, too, the first people of the middle ages who gave light to the Western European nations, and who extended their conquests south of the Great Desert, left the negroes where they found them—savages.

A second class of inquirers as to the cause of the difference between negroes and white men take a Biblical view of the question, and suppose that, inasmuch as the descendants of one man were, by a judgment of the Almighty, sentenced to be slaves forever, it is but reasonable and natural that there should be distinguishing outward marks in their organization.

The third class, embracing almost all the great men of science, hold that the negro race is specifically different from the white race. I care not what view gentlemen take, but the fact may be assumed as settled in the American mind, that there is a material difference between the negro and the white man. As Canning said, facts are stubborn things. There is a *higher law*, but it is the law of nature. When God Almighty implants his characteristics upon natural objects, man cannot change them. If a political system is in accordance with those natural laws, it will be successful. The American Constitution has been well framed in accordance with those principles. But, on the other hand, in Mexico and Jamaica, and in other places, where they have undertaken to upset the law of Providence, and to establish the doctrine of negro equality, nothing but mischief has been produced.

Since the time of our revolutionary fathers, these great discussions, supported by innumerable facts, have shaken the human mind to its center, and brought it to a conclusion of which they did not dream. Hence their opinions are worth very little in this debate. Let no man, Mr. Chairman, suppose such topics as I am now discussing are abstractions, having no real weight. These considerations, more or less, are constantly acting on the minds of men, and, in fact, are daily referred to by the opponents of the measure under examination. In another point of view, too, there has been a great change of opinion during the present age. I speak with reference to the profitableness of slave labor, and the prosperity of slaveholding countries.

The free States have fifty-four majority upon this floor. Under the old apportionment they had fifty-one, a gain of three members over the South in ten years. Sir, during that time there have been about two millions of foreigners added to the population of this country by immigration, and nearly every one of these persons have settled in the free States. If, therefore, their increase by natural means had been proportionate to that of the South, they ought to have made a gain of some twenty members instead of three, especially when the admission of California is considered.

I refer to this matter to show that our population has increased more rapidly than even that of the free States, great and prosperous as they are. That population, also, is a productive one. We

make abundant provision for ourselves as respects agricultural products generally, and are able to send a large amount of grain, &c., out of our territory, both to the North and to foreigners. In addition to all this, our production of cotton in some years amounts to nearly \$150,000,000 worth; the sugar and molasses to nearly \$20,000,000; and the tobacco, rice, &c., to a large amount. We thus furnish two thirds of the exports to foreign countries, giving thereby employment to the immense shipping interest of the Union, and enabling our tonnage already to equal that of Great Britain. Do not these facts prove that our system of industry is one that is eminently productive?

Gentlemen may tell me that one cannot get as much work out of a slave as a free man would perform. I grant it. But they forget that among a free population a large proportion are non-producers all their lives, and that even the working classes are unemployed a great part of their time; and the young persons of both sexes are usually unemployed, and, in fact, an expense, until they attain maturity. On the contrary, the negroes are almost all kept constantly at work in some way, and the consequence is, that these three millions of slaves actually produce more, probably, than the same number of free persons in any other section of the country. I do not mention these things to claim superiority for the South over the North, but merely to establish the equality of my section. You will find, too, that we have just as many churches as the free States have, and fewer paupers and criminals than any country upon earth perhaps can show. These things are stated to prove that our system is a prosperous one, and that there is no reason why this Government should be arrayed against it. I point to the fact, also, that the negroes are, whether considered physically, intellectually, socially, or morally, superior to any other portion of their race upon the globe, whether in a state of freedom or slavery.

These are views of which little or nothing was known fifty years ago; but they are taking deep hold upon the public mind now, and statesmen and wise men will look at things as they are, and ponder well before they act in opposition to the evidences of their senses and their reason. The ways of Providence are wiser than the imaginations of men, and let us therefore follow where the facts seem to point. No man knows as yet what we shall be led to; but the opinion of the country is very different now from what it was fifty years ago; and what it will be a century hence, can any man assume to say? No, sir; but the wise man will be disposed to let these things alone; he will rather permit these matters work their own way in due time. Under the influence of excited feelings, and in pursuit of a single idea, men are sometimes carried to great extremes. For example, many of the northern people insist that slavery must not be extended, but that it must be confined to its present limits. It will thus happen, say they, that after a time, for want of room, the slave population will no longer increase; and perhaps the low price of labor, and the want of means of subsistence, will induce the owners to liberate their slaves. They say that the condition of the present slave States will be like that of portions of Europe, where the population cannot increase, and where a bare subsistence can be afforded to the people in ordinary years, so that in a scarce year large numbers are swept away by famine. In this way, they argue the increase of slaves could

be prevented. A not less effectual mode, however, would be to put to death the infant negroes from time to time. This, too, would be more humane, probably, than the other process, as the amount of general misery produced by a condition of things similar to that in Ireland during the years of famine, would doubtless greatly exceed that caused by the mode suggested. Intelligent men at the North of course know that the southern States would not consent to submit to such a line of policy, and that the attempt to enforce it will merely overthrow the Government. In fact, the amount of property now held in slaves, and the interests connected with it are strong enough to protect themselves. In France, and other European countries, the strongest political systems that men could invent have been overthrown, from time to time, but the rights of property have withstood all the shocks of revolutions. So the interests which the South has will be strong enough to protect themselves—always, I hope, in the Union, but certainly out of it, should it ever become necessary. These considerations need not, however, enter largely into the present discussion. We stand on our constitutional rights, and the justice, both political and moral, of the proposition that every community ought to be allowed to regulate its own domestic matters. Adopt this cardinal line of policy, and the country will no more be disturbed with agitations about slavery.

Mr. Chairman, there was considerable excitement produced in the House yesterday by a resolution which the gentleman from Ohio [Mr. CAMPBELL] offered in reference to the annexation of Canada. This movement will enable us to illustrate the practical effect of the pending measure. If the old system of bringing the powers of the Government into collision with the rights of the South, by restricting slavery, is to prevail, as Canada would strengthen the northern movement against us, we should be opposed to its annexation. But suppose we adopt the opposite line of policy, and settle down upon the doctrine that every community shall regulate its own local and domestic affairs. Why, sir, the proposition for the annexation of Canada would be looked upon simply as a national question, as one in which the North and South were equally interested, and the advantages and disadvantages of the measures would be fairly considered by both sections. I am not by any means prepared to say that the time will not come when Canada, as well as many other provinces, will be annexed to the United States. I agree with the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. MILLSON,] that there is danger of too rapid expansion of our territory. I believe in the law of progress, but there may be such a thing as too high a rate of speed for safety. I admit all this, but must tell him that it is idle to attempt to prevent a forward movement. He might just as well strive to dam up the waters of that Niagara to which he alluded as prevent the expansion of our Republic. We must act wisely, however, and place ourselves in a condition to be benefited and not injured by these coming acquisitions of territory.

What ought we to do? Allow every portion of the country to regulate its own affairs, whether States or Territories, and turn our attention to those great national questions upon which the interests of the country demand our action. But, in justice to myself, I perhaps ought to say that while I would not hurry expansion of territory, yet neither am I prepared to say that the infant does not now live who may see all the country between Cape Horn and the Polar ocean of the north united in one empire. I do not say that it will be so, nor am I prepared to say to what extent this confederation of Republics may be carried. We are in the midst of the grandest experiment humanity has ever seen; and if we do our part wisely, I have no doubt but that, under the favor of Providence, a fortunate result will be attained.

I have witnessed, Mr. Chairman, several of these anti-slavery excitements, and I have observed that when they are first gotten up their power seems to be the greatest. The Abolitionists are well organized; they throw out their publications all over the country at once, without being over-scrupulous as to the truth and justice of their statements; and hence they hurry away the minds of the community for a season. Truth cannot travel as fast as falsehood, but in the end always overtakes her. Hence, after a full discussion and a fair understanding of the subject, the excitement is shorn of its strength, and dies out before the intelligence of the people. For example, when the question of the annexation of Texas first came up, the cry was raised that the whole North was dead against it, and that any who advocated it would be instantly crushed. Even after the matter had been adopted by the Democratic party in its convention in Baltimore on Mr. Polk's nomination, and even as late as September, the convention in New York which nominated Silas Wright for Governor, passed a resolution against the annexation of Texas, though agreeing to support Mr. Polk nevertheless; and, in fact, when Congress met, even after the election, there was great opposition

among Democratic members, but ultimately the body of these gentlemen, with the aid of some few southern Whigs, came up and passed it. I have yet to learn that a single one of them was beaten on that ground. I remember, also, when the Wilmot proviso was first brought forward, there were only six or seven gentlemen from the North who voted against it. We were told to take our last look of those gentlemen; that they went home to their political graves. Such was the language used then; but one of the preachers who pronounced their funeral sermon on more than one occasion was left at home himself; while the opponents of the Wilmot proviso came up here thicker than ever. In a little while that proviso found none so poor as to do it reverence.

When the fugitive slave law passed I was told by gentlemen who were favorable to it that it was producing an intensity of feeling in the North of which we could have no idea. They said that the whole North was against it; and in the South many were alarmed at the agitation, and some of the States passed resolutions in the strongest terms for the enforcement of the law. I do not know that anybody has been defeated because of that bill in the North where a fight was firmly made on the issue. How will it be on this occasion? Some gentlemen will go forward and tell their constituents that a great wrong has been done to the North. What is it? Why, that Congress has actually had the unparalleled—I will not say impudence, but want of justice—to allow the people of Kansas and Nebraska to legislate for themselves in local matters. Now, Mr. Chairman, do you think that it will produce any excitement when the question is understood? Not a bit of it. When the idea is first thrown out that we are repealing the Missouri compromise to let slavery into that Territory, there will be the greatest excitement; but as the question comes to be canvassed and examined from time to time, the result will be that the issue will take a hold on the popular mind which none can resist.

I have never in my life been afraid, when I felt that I was right, to make an issue and debate a question before the people. I recollect very well that some years ago I was the only man from the South who voted for the reception of abolition petitions, and against the twenty-first rule. There was a very intense excitement in my part of the country against their reception; but when I came to discuss and examine the question, I was fully sustained by the people.

And here let me say that I do not deprecate debate on the subject of slavery. On the contrary, my own opinion is that a calm, temperate discussion of all these questions in Congress is positively beneficial. When I came here, ten years ago, it was the fashion for southern men to say that "you cannot venture to discuss slavery. It must not be talked about in Congress." The consequence was, the Abolitionists were rampant when they saw that we seemed to be afraid of them, and they pressed upon us, getting stronger and stronger all the time as we appeared to retreat and quail before them. The most cowardly cur, if you run from him, will follow and bite you. I took at once a different view, and was disposed to meet the question; taking the ground calmly then that we had better confront our enemies face to face. The great discussion which has since occurred, I am quite confident, has strengthened our position all through the North. Liberal men in that section now find less difficulty in sustaining themselves. The northern and the southern people agree better and better as they come to understand each other's views.

There is a great amount of common sense and good feeling among our people everywhere; and the discussion, sir, of all these questions has been productive of nothing but benefit. Remember that we cannot prevent the Abolitionists debating these things. They will go all through the North, and spread their pamphlets far and near. They will have their preachers and lecturers. I have had a great many sermons sent to me lately. They have two striking qualities—rhetoric and ignorance; and the very fact that so many of these northern preachers—I mean Abolition preachers—have neglected their holy calling to embark in politics, is probably the reason why infidelity is making such a great headway among the Abolitionists. I am very sorry to see it. [Laughter.] I think that it would be better for them to discuss religion. Unless they cease we shall be compelled to send missionaries among them. [Laughter.] I read many of their papers, and, in common with the rest of the community, am shocked with witnessing their infidelity and blasphemy. They will eternally keep up this discussion about slavery. Then why not let it be calmly and temperately debated, since it is necessarily before us in connection with this bill, and will be brought up occasionally by kindred topics?

As my time has expired, I omit some points that I had intended to discuss, and I shall now take my seat, thanking the committee for the attention with which they have heard me.

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